

“Our local law enforcement performs superbly day in and day out and by denying them continued funding puts us all at risk”

Rochester, NY – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) today said that Western New York was unjustly removed from the list of areas that received federal funding as part of a grant program meant to assist local law enforcement deal with the threat of terrorist attacks.

Today the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced grant funding for the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), a program designed to help local law enforcement in areas considered to be at high risk for terrorist attacks. Among the cities to receive funding: Tampa (\$5.4 M), Orlando (3.6 M), Cleveland (\$3.5 M), Cincinnati (\$3.4 M) and Portland (\$5.02 M), but not Buffalo or Rochester.

Last year, Buffalo and Rochester each received funding as part of the UASI program, \$5,544,750 and \$2,307,800 respectively. In fact, Buffalo’s application, in a joint effort with Erie County and Niagara County, received national recognition for the quality of their proposal. More on past funding is available [here](#).

“In Western New York we appreciate the many national security needs across the country, but when Buffalo and Rochester, two cities along our northern border are denied funding when smaller municipalities in America’s interior receive funding, I have to question our security priorities,” said Slaughter. “Frankly, we were wrongly denied this vital funding. Our local law enforcement performs superbly day in and day out and Western New York is home to several major international border crossings. Denying our area continued funding puts us all at risk.”

In March, Slaughter signed a letter to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees expressing opposition to an amendment that would restrict the eligibility for the UASI program from 64 high risk urban areas to 25 high risk urban areas, including Buffalo and Rochester.

“We cannot lay the entire financial burden of securing our cities on local authorities, first responders, law enforcement and agencies and expect to adequately protect our citizens and make our cities safe,” Slaughter said with other lawmakers.

A copy of the letter is included below.

Western New York did receive funding from two grant programs announced by DHS today, the Port Security Grant Program where Buffalo was awarded \$1.4 million and an undetermined portion of \$1.4 million made available to Buffalo and Rochester as part of the Metropolitan Medical Response Program. In total, the amounts are relatively unimpressive given our proximity to the border.

A summary of received funding is included below.

Letter to House and Senate Appropriations Chairmen and Ranking Members

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Dicks:

We write to express our strong support for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) program and our opposition to an amendment that was adopted during House consideration of the Fiscal Year 2011 Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act that would restrict the eligibility for the UASI program from 64 high risk urban areas to 25 high risk urban areas. We urge you to remove the language from the final FY 2011 appropriations package.

As you know, the UASI program plays an important role in the ability of state and local agencies, authorities, first responders and law enforcement to regionally prepare for and coordinate efforts against homeland security threats. Specifically, the UASI program provides financial assistance to ensure that high-threat, high-density urban areas have the capability to prevent, protect, respond and recover from homeland security threats.

While we understand that cities in Tier 1 face the highest risk of a terrorist attack, the threat and risk to our communities are real as well. Our cities are not invulnerable to terrorist attacks and disasters. As you know, the Secretary of Homeland Security assesses and evaluates the relative risk of terrorism faced by the 100 most populous metropolitan statistical areas in the United States to determine which cities are in need of UASI funds to prepare and respond to homeland security threats. The risk analysis looks at what the potential threat is, what the vulnerability is, and what the consequences are if attacked.

The communities we represent contain numerous assets, resources and critical infrastructure that are vulnerable to attack and that are tremendously important to the nation. Our first responders are right to hold training exercises and coordinate response scenarios. This valuable preparedness comes at a cost, and at a time when state and local budgets are being slashed, now is not the time to eliminate the eligibility of our threatened urban areas from UASI funding. We cannot lay the entire financial burden of securing our cities on local authorities, first responders, law enforcement and agencies and expect to adequately protect our citizens and make our cities safe.

Please remove this harmful UASI language from the final FY2011 appropriations package and ensure our cities have the necessary capabilities to safeguard our communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this important national security matter.

Sincerely,

Funding Received by Western New York:

Buffalo- \$1,455,521

Port Security Grant Program

In FY 2011, the Port Security Grant Program (PSGP) provides \$235,029,000 for transportation infrastructure security activities to implement Area Maritime Transportation Security Plans and facility security plans among port authorities, facility operators, and State and local government agencies required to provide port security services.

Buffalo, Rochester, New York City, Syracuse and Yonkers- \$1,408,465

Metropolitan Medical Response Program

The FY 2011 Metropolitan Security Grant Program (MMRS) provides \$34,929,932 to support the integration of emergency management, health, and medical systems into a coordinated response to mass casualty incidents caused by any hazard.

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